

SIRCCULAR

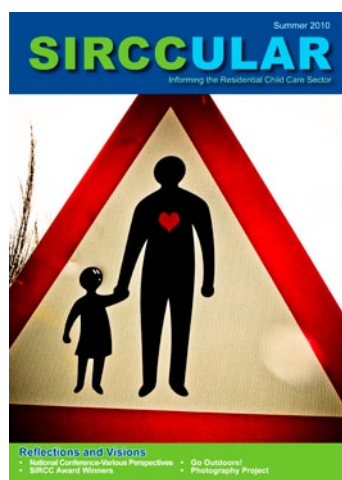
Informing the Residential Child Care Sector



Reflections and Visions

- National Conference-Variou Perspectives
- SIRCC Award Winners
- Go Outdoors!
- Photography Project

In the 'Reflections and Visions' Issue...



Cover Photo
Taken and
developed by
Kimberley Grant

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The themes for the next issue are **Registration** and **Education**.

Have you got an idea, story or photo for SIRCCULAR? Great! Please contact the SIRCC National Office
Tel: 0141 950 3683
or email us at:
sirccevents@strath.ac.uk

What is SIRCC?

The Scottish Institute for Residential Child Care (SIRCC) is funded by the Scottish Government and is a partnership of the University of Strathclyde, The Robert Gordon University, Who Cares? Scotland and Langside College. SIRCC was established in 2000 with the aim of ensuring that residential child care staff have access to the skills and knowledge they require to meet the needs of the children and young people in their care.



Welcome

This issue of SIRCCULAR brings you some of the highlights of the SIRCC National Conference in Aviemore. I would like to thank all our contributors and we hope you find this issue useful and interesting.

One of the highlights, as we celebrated SIRCC's 10th anniversary, was the first of what will become an annual ceremony for three brand new SIRCC awards. Read about the winners in this issue. Located throughout SIRCCULAR, we are also privileged to have been provided with some outstanding and inspiring photography, first presented to us by young people, from Who Cares? Scotland and Voice of Reason, at the conference.

Do look out for some of the other SIRCC events that are coming up this autumn. Away with Words provides another chance to hear from several of the National Conference speakers, and Making the Margins Mainstream is important for everyone concerned with education. Further information on both these events is available within this issue of SIRCCULAR so please pass details onto colleagues who may be interested.



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Assistant Director, SIRCC

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Items published do not necessarily reflect a specific SIRCC point of view and should not be seen as an endorsement of particular organisations.

The World Through Different Eyes

The special photographs featured in this issue were all taken by young people involved in a photography project which was designed to allow young people to express their thoughts and feelings on their journey through care. These were featured in a presentation at the conference, a publication and a travelling art exhibition across the country, for which some of the best photos were blown up onto canvas.

Thanks to all who took part.



Jordan

This powerful image was taken by Jordan as he felt it reflected times when he had promises shattered whilst in care

Comments from conference delegates...

'I was most touched by the young people's presentation and I feel that I will take this back to work with me and always remember that the young people I work with have dreams and aspirations and deserve the chance to strive to succeed in these. In particular, the young person who photographed a half-filled black bag and stated that whenever he moves from placement to placement, the staff give him a black bag to put his stuff in, as if his life and possessions were rubbish, had a deep impact on me as I have been guilty of this in the past. I will never do this in my practice again.'



Alex

Don't Let Your Dreams
Wash Away

Comments from conference delegates...

- '... a very creative way of getting over their messages about their experiences in care'
- '... It made me recognise that as a carer we don't always get it right for the young people. A little thought from the carer can make a big difference to a young person and make them realise we do care.'



Fraser

Describing
how he
once was
given his
stuff on
leaving
a unit

What Went On in the World Café?

A special feature of the 10th anniversary conference this year was the 'World Café'. The purpose of this was to involve everyone in the creation of what will eventually become The Aviemore Declaration. This declaration aims to clarify, contextualise and promote the role and status of high quality residential child care within the wider continuum of care locally, nationally and internationally.

The 'café' style discussions involved around 300 people sitting at tables with a facilitator. Every twenty minutes each group moved on to a slightly different discussion at a new table. Each table had a flag and some information about child care in one particular country. This had a useful purpose in helping to focus discussions on issues that affect children throughout the world and not just Scotland.

The world café was just the start of the process and it involved much debate and lively discussion. Three areas were discussed:

- Principles – Here we considered how to put children at the centre of our work, working in partnership with the best professional skills in a way that is relevant to the social, political and economic context, wherever that might be.
- Outcomes – The function of this café was to work out what we would like the declaration to achieve.
- Actions – This discussion looked at the practicalities of making The Aviemore Declaration useful, relevant, visible and accessible, rather than stuck in a cupboard.

The main threads of the discussions at every table were written down and added to by every group visiting that table. These were then typed up after the conference. The next stage is scrutiny and analysis of all the comments to develop the declaration further.

People's contributions were insightful, reflective and highly creative and on behalf of SIRCC I would again like to thank all those who were involved. It was great to see such enthusiasm and passion at the world café.

We will report on progress as the Aviemore declaration begins to take shape in future months.

Jennifer Davidson
Director, SIRCC



Hong Kong Meets Scotland

Peter K. S. Kwan
Director,
Hong Kong Student Aid
Society



In June 2010, Pax, Maggie and I attended the 10th Anniversary Conference of the Scottish Institute for Residential Child Care (SIRCC), with a sponsorship given by the Hong Kong Council of Social Service.

We first arrived at Edinburgh where we were well received by the good sunny weather and the long daytime, which lasted until 10pm till the sun set. The well-known Edinburgh Castle was beautiful. It was our pleasure having a look at it from Princes Street while shopping there.

The Conference lasted from June 7 till June 9. We took a train from Edinburgh to Aviemore, where the Conference took place, a day before its commencement. When we got off from the train, we were greeted by heavy rain. Wendy Cox, Events and Communications Manager of SIRCC, was the first person we met at the MacDonald's Highland Resort, which was the Conference's venue. When she saw us, three Chinese strangers pulling our luggage around in the rain, she recognised that we were the Hong Kong participants. She was kind enough to have given us a ride to the Resort reception. This was, in fact, a good beginning for us.

The next three days went very fast. The Conference's programmes were substantial, from morning till dinner gathering in the evening. We met a lot of new friends, who were all very helpful.

Many of them were eager to be our mentors in Scottish cultural dance at the last dinner banquet of the Conference. Though amateurs in dancing, we did enjoy the cultural dance. Staff members of North Lanarkshire Council and Kibble, to whom we would pay a visit after the Conference, greeted us a lot and became our friends.

Special thanks are due to Dr Ian Milligan and Dr. Graham Connelly of SIRCC, who know residential care so much and who helped arrange our post-Conference visits to residential child care services in Glasgow. They had had a busy time with us, since we were so keen to bombard them with questions on residential care in Scotland.

The SIRCC Conference left us with good impressions. In retrospect, we were most impressed by the enthusiasm and quality of care our counterparts in Scotland show towards the looked after children and young people. We were happy to learn that greater importance has been placed in residential care as an effective means of out-of-home child care services and it was no longer treated as only a last resort in Scotland. Last but not the least, the Vision 2020 shared among residential child care practitioners in Scotland deeply moved us. With this master plan and shared goals, we trust that residential care in Scotland can reach new heights in the near future.



The SIRCC Residential



Residential Worker of the Year Award 2010
Gail Ahmed, Renfrewshire Council being presented
with her award by Lisa, Voice of Reason

As part of SIRCC's 10th Anniversary year we launched our inaugural Residential Child Care Awards, recognising good practice in the provision of services for children and young people in residential care in Scotland. These awards provided an opportunity to recognise value and encourage and celebrate best practice that is prevalent across the sector.

Categories

- **Best Practice**
To recognise best practice in a specific area of service delivery.
- **Innovative Partnership Work in Health**
To recognise innovative partnership in health. This award will change focus each year and next year will recognise 'Innovative Partnership with Parents'.
- **Residential Worker of the Year**
An award nominated by young people, providing an opportunity for them to share with us the value and benefits of their relationships with residential child care workers.

We were overwhelmed by the quality of nominations that we received, to the extent that we actually created various levels of recognition in relation to the awards. Firstly, it is important to recognise that all of the nominations in all of the categories reflected good practice, however, some work specifically merited being commended or highly commended in addition to the recipients of the awards.

Best Practice Award 2010

North Lanarkshire Council

Living Nearby

This is a new initiative to improve success in transition between children's houses and independent living in North Lanarkshire. It involves joint working between housing and social work services to provide a scatter flat (a small, furnished flat provided on a temporary basis) or tenancy nearby so that young people can continue to be supported by the children's house in which they used to live.

Highly Commended in the category of Best Practice Dean & Cauvin Trust

A residential service which is used to support young parents to raise their children effectively, despite their young age and their poor experiences of being parented themselves.

West Lothian Council/Scottish Mediation

Peer mediation project

Residential services have adopted a peer mediation approach across the four residential children's homes. This has incorporated working in partnership with Scottish Mediation Network.

Commended in the category of Best Practice Quarriers - Seafield School

A participation and inclusion project which ensures the active inclusion of children and young people throughout the service and is committed to involving young people in as many ways as possible.

Innovative Partnership Work Health Award 2010

City of Edinburgh Council

Health Promoting Units

The Health Promoting Units scheme is currently being rolled out across all City of Edinburgh residential care units – this provides a multi-agency partnership involving CEC Residential Childcare Manager, residential unit staff, CEC health improvement staff, NHS Lothian LAC Nursing Service, NHS Lothian Health Promotion Service, Edinburgh Connect (mental health service) and Healthy Respect (sexual health and relationships). In addition, a real partnership approach to the successful implementation of this work has been adopted by the City's residential care units in the form of a dedicated health link workers support group which meets regularly with the purpose of supporting one another as units work move through the process.

al Child Care Awards

Highly Commended in the category of Innovative Partnership Work – Health 2010

North Lanarkshire Council

This Corporate Parenting Health Working Group is a multi-disciplinary group operating across North Lanarkshire's children's houses to improve health outcomes for young people living in the houses.

We will be working with the organisations who have received the awards to identify opportunities to share their work via events and publications.

The information below in relation to the Residential Child Care Worker of the Year provides a brief snapshot of some of the things that young people highlighted as the important qualities of the workers and how the relationship has had a positive impact on their lives. Unfortunately it is not possible to comment on all of the nominees and therefore comments are restricted to the recipient of the award and the worker who was highly commended. However it says something about all of the workers who were nominated that young people took the time to submit a nomination.

Residential Worker of the Year Award 2010

Gail Ahmed

Renfrewshire Council

Gail has been working in Residential Child Care in Renfrewshire Council for over 30 years.

She has been working with the young person who nominated her for eight years and it is clear that they have a very positive relationship.

'Gail is special in her own way she is funny, good natured and a very kind and loving person.'

He also spoke about some of the differences she has made in his life including...

'I was very scared and nervous but I am now a very confident young man - she helped me boost my confidence.'

The external manager also highlighted the importance and strength of the relationship between Gail and the young people with whom she works.



SIRCC Awards

Highly Commended in the category of Residential Worker of the Year 2010

Gavin McDonald

West Lothian Council

The nomination indicated that Gavin has made a massive difference for young people, building their confidence and self-esteem. Young people said he has his heart in the right place and he always does what he says he will.

Commended in the category of Residential Worker of the Year

- Stuart Wallis, East Ayrshire Council
- Sandra Carson, Glasgow City Council
- George Stirling, Glasgow City Council
- Joanne Thomson, City of Edinburgh Council

Nominees for Residential Worker of the Year

- Alan Turner, Sycamore Services
- Chris Barclay, West Lothian Council
- Christine Grey, Glasgow City Council
- Claire Ray, Inverclyde Council
- Craig Faller, CrossReach
- Craig Morrow, City of Edinburgh Council
- David McKellar, East Ayrshire Council
- David Robertson, West Lothian Council
- Jackie Cairnduff, Glasgow City Council
- Jacqui Gianley, Renfrewshire Council
- Joan Naughton, Glasgow City Council
- Kathleen Green, Renfrewshire Council
- Lesley McGlone, Glasgow City Council
- Libby Dickson, Rossie School
- Lorraine Friel, Glasgow City Council
- Margaret O'Hara, Inverclyde Council
- Martin McDonald, Bolnacraig School
- May Walaran, Glasgow City Council
- Michael Deafly, Inverclyde Council
- Nicole Matthew, Glasgow City Council
- Stacey Lenahan, City of Edinburgh Council

We will be posting information about next years awards on the SIRCC website early next year. We look forward to receiving further nominations and to share some of the excellent practice and services that are being delivered in residential child care settings in Scotland.

Go Outdoors!

Go Outdoors!, which I launched at SIRCC's national conference in Aviemore in May, introduces new guidance designed to help practitioners and managers working in residential child care to carry out their duty of care safely and responsibly. The guidance was drafted — with the encouragement of The Scottish Government — by SIRCC and members of a group I convened which included the Health and Safety Executive, the Association of British Insurers, Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents, the Care Commission, and providers of residential services from the voluntary and local authority sector. All of these organisations are committed to reducing risk-averse practice.

The new guidance came about as a result of a hard hitting report called *Playing it Safe* published two years ago by my predecessor, Kathleen Marshall. This raised serious concerns about the 'safety myths' that led to children and young people in residential child care missing out on normal, outdoor activities because adults were afraid of being sued or blamed if an accident occurred. Some of the examples raised in that report included young people not being allowed to swim at the beach unless they were secured with a rope to a member of staff, risk assessments being done before every bicycle ride that required young people to wear knee and elbow pads as well as a helmet, and an approved instructor needed to accompany young people for walks on a local hill which is so easily accessible that it's a popular walk for people of all ages in that community. Although professionals working in child care and education don't want to see young people's lives restricted in these ways, fear of *blame, being disciplined and possible litigation* had got in the way.

Playing it Safe showed that such practices arose due to a lack of understanding of what is legally required and led to a flood of requests from local authorities across Scotland for clarification of their responsibilities and examples of good practice.

Go Outdoors! offers a sensible balance. It promotes a common-sense approach to health and safety while recognising the huge benefits of play and outdoor adventure which are so vital for young people's physical health, mental wellbeing and social development. It makes several key points including that residential care providers should encourage appropriate risk-taking and that complex and repeated risk assessments for normal, outdoor activities are, quite simply, unnecessary.

There's a section that provides the policy context for the new guidance, illustrating how it fits with a rights approach and is consistent with current policy and practice.

The chapter on developing organisational guidance addresses comments that were made in *Playing it Safe* and in our survey: that residential care practitioners should ask 'what would a reasonable parent do?' This

Go Outdoors!
Guidance and good
practice report



was linked to the idea of defensible risk as opposed to defensive practice. Some issues have to be addressed at an organisational level as well as at the level of the individual residential unit or practitioner. The guidance also includes a number of useful templates of written documentation including a simple risks and hazards register and day to day risk assessment.

Many of the same issues raised by *Go Outdoors!* are not specific to the residential child care sector. They crop up in the formal education sector and prevent children and young people at school from enjoying their rights to take part in normal, outdoor activities. A risk-averse and bureaucratic environment — which leads to 'cotton wool' kids — breaches children's rights and undermines good outcomes for all children, but especially those in residential care.

The new guidance exhorts everyone working with children and young people to encourage them to learn how to manage risks, become more resilient and develop their powers of judgement. After all, how can any child learn to prevent or avoid accidents and become a wiser adult in the process if they're not given the chance to take any risks and put their learning into practice?

You can find a copy of the guidance on: www.sccyp.org.uk - see Policy and Research pages, click on Publications link.

Tam Baillie
Scotland's Commissioner
for Children and Young People



Conference Highlights



John Carnochan QPM
Detective Chief
Superintendent,
Head of Scottish Violence
Reduction Unit

'Getting Our Priorities Right'

Among the highlights at this year's SIRCC National Conference was the story of a young man called David.

Told by Detective Chief Superintendent John Carnochan, head of the Violence Reduction Unit, David's Story relates the tale of how a young man ended up a murderer.

Starting with his birth to a drug-addicted mother, John guided the audience at Aviemore through David's troubled early life, which was marked by multiple house moves from one deprived area to another as his family was re-homed due to repeated domestic abuse. He then showed the impact this had on the young David, demonstrating how easily a youngster growing up surrounded by people who use violence to resolve conflict came to see this as normal, acceptable behaviour.

John then reviewed the tragic story, showing how far services have come since then and potential points of intervention that might help someone like David now, stressing that this still wasn't enough to stop future Davids. He then revealed that David himself was now a father – with all the potential implications that might bring for his child.

The purpose of the story was to show the importance of agencies like SIRCC working together and sharing information to improve the lives of those they help. It also highlighted the importance of preventative work that can stop young men like David reaching the point of no return. There is no doubt that working with such young people is challenging and is not 'just doing a job'; the work is far more important than that, as we all know. Yet the positive influence we can all have on young people in our care can be profound. Even through engaging them in simple, everyday ways, we can make a difference, however small, in helping stop more young men ending up like David.

Comments from conference delegates

John Carnochan's Presentation

- 'Made me wonder what had happened to community social work.'
- '... it showed where improvements need to be made within society and the part we all have to play.'
- '... (he explained) why early intervention is important to safeguard kids – while reinforcing the need to start reacting to antisocial behaviour and not tolerate it...'



'The World Through Different Eyes' Lisa's Story

Showing all the different images that are important to her from her life

Planning: Reflections and Visions

For residential child care professionals the annual SIRCC conference has always been an un-missable showcase for innovative and best practice. This year was no different. As someone who works in a relatively small organisation, participating in the SIRCC conference planning committee and ultimately attending the 10th anniversary conference was a great opportunity. I met and shared ideas with others from the whole spectrum of residential childcare services, plus of course the SIRCC staff.

The planning and selection process for speakers was challenging as many worthy papers and discussions demonstrated a wide range of interesting views and diverse areas of childcare practice, theory and research, both nationally and internationally.

As the conference celebrated SIRCC's 10th anniversary, it became very evident that SIRCC has evolved into an expert resource which communicates and develops responses to residential childcare issues allowing all involved to learn. Over the past 10 years in different roles and in organisations, my colleagues and I have greatly benefited from SIRCC's support, training and consultancy role.

The introduction of the Residential Child Care Awards at this year's conference was a great success. They should serve as an incentive to many residential childcare staff as they work daily in innovative, resourceful



Geraldine O'Neill
Head of Care, East Park

ways, clearly committed to positive outcomes for their young people.

The planning for the 2011 conference is already underway. There is no doubt that residential childcare is unlikely to escape the effects of the current financial environment. But judging from the delegates and presenters of this year's conference, the enthusiasm and pursuit of innovative ways of working will not be easily stifled. At a practical level, however, we may find ourselves looking at different ways of working to ensure continued high quality support from professional and reflective staff.

Effective consultative partnerships and closer more practical working relationships across organisations are likely to lead to more effective use of available resources.

High quality residential childcare services can never be cheap but hopefully the future will encourage a shared sense of realism across the sector over the balance between quality and costs. It will be interesting to see the extent to which these issues may be reflected in upcoming SIRCC conferences.

'The World Through Different Eyes'

Kimberley
Just a job.
Just another
kid in care.



Comments from conference delegates...

Exhibition and networking

- 'Good range of exhibits ... lots of information and resources'
- 'A crucial part of the conference is the opportunity to share thoughts, practice ideas and learn from one another. This conference offered an excellent range of chances to do this.'
- 'I enjoyed the food! Would have liked more chips!'
- 'I valued the opportunity to share experiences... with colleagues from different parts of the country.'



Fringe events

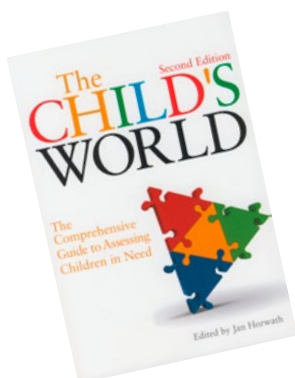
- 'Really enjoyed the computer workshop'
- 'Salsa was fun and made relationships'



'The World Through Different Eyes'

Julie Ann
Feeling small
after
securing her
first
tenancy

Books



Jan Horwath (ed.), *The Child's World: the Comprehensive Guide to Assessing Children in Need: second edition*. Jessica Kingsley, 2010

This new and updated edition of this book on assessing children in need and their families integrates practice, policy and theory to produce a comprehensive and multidisciplinary guide to all aspects of assessment. The Child's World not only provides an explanation of the Framework for the Assessment of Children in Need and their Families, but also offers a wealth of information on how to use it sensitively and effectively. The Child's World explores the implications of recent legislation, including the Children Act 2004, and national guidance for assessment practice. By drawing on the latest research, best practice, and lessons learnt over the past decade of Framework implementation, the contributors equip practitioners with the skills to identify the developmental needs of children, assess parental capacity and evaluate the impact of family, economic and environmental factors on the carer's ability to meet the needs of the child.

H. Cleaver, I. Unell and J. Aldgate, *Children's Needs: Parenting Capacity*. The Stationery Office, 1999 (new impression, 2010).

How do parental mental illness, problem alcohol or drug use and domestic violence impact on children's development? Do children always suffer as a result? An exploration of the research literature shows that these potential problems affect children differently depending on their age and individual circumstances. While some children grow up apparently unscathed, others exhibit emotional and behavioural disorders. This knowledge can inform practitioners undertaking assessments of the needs of children and their families and effective service responses. This book is essential reading for practitioners, managers and policy makers concerned with improving the outcomes for children and families who are experiencing such problems.

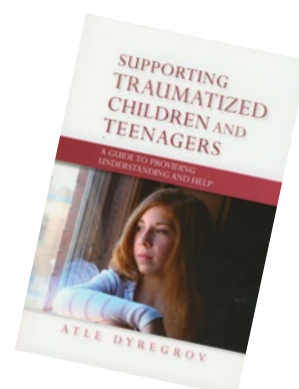


Kate Cairns and Eileen Fursland, *Transitions and Endings: a Training Programme*. BAAF, 2008.

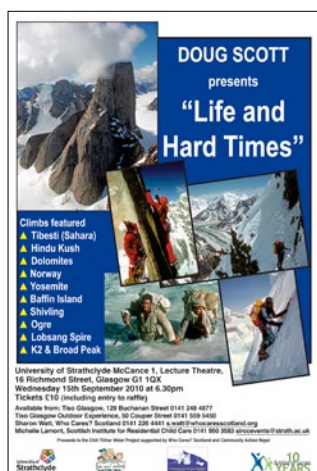
Transitions are life events and changes - and change always creates stress. None of us can go through life without any transitions, but some people are more affected by the stress of change than others. The same is true for children in the care system, particularly those who have been traumatised by neglect, rejection, or physical, emotional or sexual abuse. These children can face particular challenges when dealing with transitions and endings, and can often find the stress of change to be overwhelming, particularly the unplanned changes that can result from disruption of a placement. The course consists of three interlinked modules: *Resilience and transitions*, *Moving on: promoting successful transitions and constructive endings*, and *Growing through grief: managing unplanned transitions and endings*.

Atle Dyregrov, *Supporting Traumatized Children and Teenagers: a Guide to providing Understanding and Help*. Jessica Kingsley, 2010.

Trauma can result from a range of experiences, from bullying to witnessing violence to living through war. This book explores the different reactions children may experience, and the impact trauma can have. Appropriate and effective ways of helping children after a traumatic event are outlined, including different types of therapy, such as group therapy and cognitive behavioural therapy. The book offers case examples and practical tips throughout, and includes a chapter on how someone working with a traumatized child should also take time to help and look after themselves. This is an invaluable book for a range of professionals working with traumatized children including counsellors, child and family social workers and therapists, as well as others caring for traumatized children such as foster carers and teachers.



Upcoming SIRCC Events



Doug Scott 'Life and Hard Times'

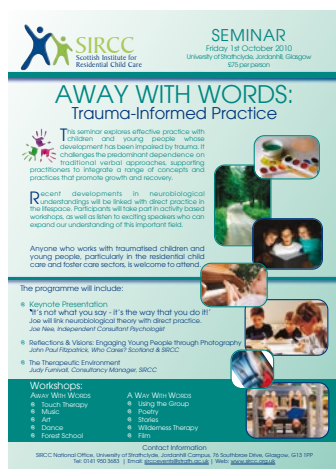
Evening Fundraising
Lecture in aid of work
in Nepal organised in
conjunction with Who
Cares? Scotland

Wednesday 15th
September 2010

University of Strathclyde
(City Centre)

Tickets cost £10 per person
Please order in advance
from:

- SIRCC
- Who Cares? Scotland
- Tiso, Glasgow



AWAY WITH WORDS Trauma-Informed Practice

Friday 1st October 2010
Jordanhill, Glasgow

We have an exciting range of speakers and workshops for this event, including making rhythm and music, poetry, forest school, art, dance, wilderness experience, touch therapy, and much more as we look at the therapeutic environment.

Joe Nee, Independent Consultant Psychologist is our keynote speaker for this event and will be linking neurobiological theory with direct practice.

The cost is £75 per person.

Making the Margins Mainstream

SIRCC Education Conference

Wednesday 10th
November 2010

Westerwood Hotel, near
Croy

Robbie Gilligan is the keynote speaker and workshops and other inputs will cover a range of topics including

- engaging with parents
- making the most of modern technology
- research, outcomes
- Curriculum for Excellence
- partnership working
- hearing from young people

Cost £99 per person

Limited exhibition space is
available

Contact SIRCC for further info

Tel 0141 950 3683

Email sircc@strath.ac.uk

Research into Practice

Friday 3rd
December 2010

The Merchant
Hall, Edinburgh

This is designed
to help ensure a
cross-over between
research and
practice, enable
policy-makers to
keep up to date
and to inspire
practitioners to
look at effective
ways of developing
existing practice or
becoming involved
in research.

Contact the SIRCC
National Office for
further information.

Other Information



Scottish
Attachment
in Action

Annual Conference and AGM

Date & Venue:
Friday 10th September 2010
Inchrya Grange Hotel, Falkirk

Speakers:
Alan Sinclair, Phil Watson,
Sally Wassell, Dan Hughes

For further information:
www.saia.org.uk

Are you aged 16-19 and up for fun and a challenge? Then **Inspiring Young Futures** could be for you. **Inspiring Young Futures** is a personal development programme which could help increase your confidence, motivation and aspirations by giving you the chance to take part in outdoor adventures, group work and relationship building with staff and other like minded young people. The course is designed around you and is flexible to meet your needs. Throughout the programme you would get the chance to do supported work within your own community, go out in our mobile training centre and also have the chance to experience wilderness by taking part in activities in the Scottish Highlands for up to 10 days.

If you are up for the challenge and want to find out more, get in touch - do it today! Call **0131 228 7700** or check out our website, www.venturetrust.org.uk, for more details.

This project is currently running across Central Scotland.